United Nations E/2013/71

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 May 2013

Original: English

Substantive session of 2013
Geneva, 1-26 July 2013
Item 7 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Coordination, programme and other questions: mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/24 to assess progress made in the promotion of gender equality within the United Nations system. As requested in that resolution, particular emphasis is placed on accountability for system-wide work on gender equality and the empowerment of women at both the global and the country level, including the roll-out of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

For the first time, the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective draws on reporting by 55 United Nations entities under the Action Plan. It also draws on information from 123 annual reports of resident coordinators for 2012. This has allowed for a more comprehensive presentation of system-wide information and evidence than in the past.

The report concludes with recommendations for consideration by the Economic and Social Council.

* E/2013/100.

13-32913 (E) 310513

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/24, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution, including on progress made in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women,[1] the new framework that increases accountability for United Nations work related to gender equality and the empowerment of women. The results of reporting in 2013, outlined below, provide the first baseline for the United Nations system's performance on gender mainstreaming at the corporate level against which future progress can be measured.

2. The report is organized in five sections. Following the present introduction, section II provides an overview of progress in the implementation of the Action Plan; section III assesses progress in United Nations entities' efforts to promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all operational mechanisms; section IV presents an overview of remaining gaps and challenges; and section V includes recommendations aimed at accelerated action, for consideration by the Council.

3. The report draws on information and data provided by 55 United Nations entities through their reporting, 123 annual reports of resident coordinators for 2012 and other sources.

II. Promoting system-wide accountability of the United Nations for its work on gender equality and empowerment of women

4. The United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women[1] has enhanced accountability for the United Nations system's work on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Its adoption and use across the United Nations system reaffirm the value of applying a gender perspective to the broad spectrum of United Nations mandates for peace and security, human rights, development and humanitarian assistance.

5. With its agreed set of 15 performance indicators clustered in six broad and common functional areas,[2] the Action Plan established a new model for accountability, allowing a snapshot of the state of work to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women. In addition to setting common standards and providing a monitoring framework, it is also expected to motivate action and investments to meet those standards.

---

[1] See www.unwomen.org/2012/04/un-women-welcomes-a-landmark-action-plan-to-measure-gender-equality-across-the-un-system/.

[2] The six areas correspond to the six elements of the 2006 gender equality policy of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination: accountability; results-based management; oversight through monitoring, evaluation and reporting; human and financial resources; staff capacity; and coherence, coordination and knowledge management.

6. The Action Plan has resulted in several significant and immediate shifts in how the United Nations system approaches its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, as shown in the table below:

Pre-Action Plan	*Post-Action Plan*
Limited guidance and direction on gender equality and the empowerment of women for the United Nations system	Agreed standards applied and monitored across the United Nations system
Repeated and unfulfilled requests from Member States for an accountability framework	A uniform and system-wide accountability framework, welcomed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2012/24 and by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/226
Responsibility for work on gender equality and the empowerment of women limited to gender units and focal points	Decentralized responsibility and revitalization of gender equality and the empowerment of women across the United Nations system
Disparate and fragmented data and reporting on work on gender equality and the empowerment of women work	More coherent and harmonized data and reporting identifying United Nations-wide strengths and weaknesses

7. The results of the first year of Action Plan reporting will establish the baseline against which all future performance will be measured. United Nations system entities, departments and offices have until 2017 to meet the performance standards, which are outlined below.[3]

A. Baseline reporting

8. The Action Plan framework captures performance and progress through a gradated self-rating system with five steps: not applicable; missing;[4] approaches requirements; meets requirements; exceeds requirements. "Meets requirements" is the minimum the United Nations system should achieve, on the basis of intergovernmental mandates. Reporting on remedial action plans, which include time frames, budgets and responsibilities, is mandatory for ratings below "meets requirements". Remedial action plans present measures expected to facilitate further progress; they will be central for ensuring progress and accountability under the System-wide Action Plan.

[3] Technical entities and those with fewer than 500 staff have until 2019 to meet the performance standards.

[4] "Not applicable" means that the indicator was not relevant to a given entity (e.g. if it did not have an evaluation office). "Missing" means that the entity has carried out no work in the area covered by the indicator.

9. Fifty-five entities submitted reports, or 82 per cent of those required to do so.[5] Each submission was reviewed by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). After revisions and resubmission by entities, a discrepancy between the entity and UN-Women as to the accuracy of the rating remained in only 3 per cent of cases, demonstrating that the performance indicators constitute clear measures.[6] Twelve entities (50 per cent of them United Nations research or training institutes) did not report, which is a matter of concern.

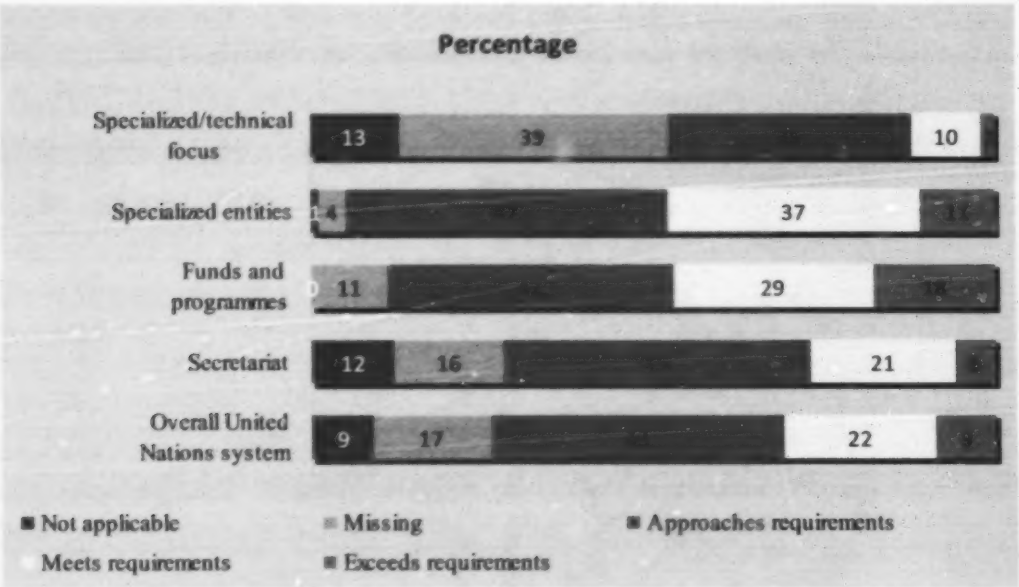
[5] Reporting entities organized into the categories under which analysis has been carried out are (a) United Nations Secretariat: Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Field Support, Department of Management, Department of Political Affairs, Department of Public Information, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Safety and Security, Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Office of Administration of Justice, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Office for Disarmament Affairs, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), Office of Legal Affairs, Peacebuilding Support Office, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Office at Geneva, United Nations Office at Nairobi; (b) funds and programmes: International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Trade Centre (ITC), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Capital Development Fund, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), World Food Programme (WFP); (c) specialized entities: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Training Centre of ILO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO); (d) specialized entities with a technical focus: Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Universal Postal Union (UPU), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The 12 entities that did not report on the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women are (a) training and research institutes: United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), United Nations System Staff College, United Nations University (UNU); (b) Secretariat: Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office at Vienna; (c) specialized entities with a technical focus: International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) participated in the development and roll-out of the Action Plan, but noted that they would not report on it, given their status vis-à-vis the United Nations system.

[6] The technical notes to the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women define each of the indicators to ensure a common understanding of the rating, thereby ensuring comparability.

10. For purposes of analysis, entities were grouped into four categories (see figure I and footnote 5), on the basis of the standard United Nations organizational breakdown,[7] facilitating analysis of data for the whole system, for its component parts and by performance indicator (see figure II).

B. Overall findings for 2013

Figure I
Performance ratings of the United Nations system in respect of the 15 performance indicators, by entity type



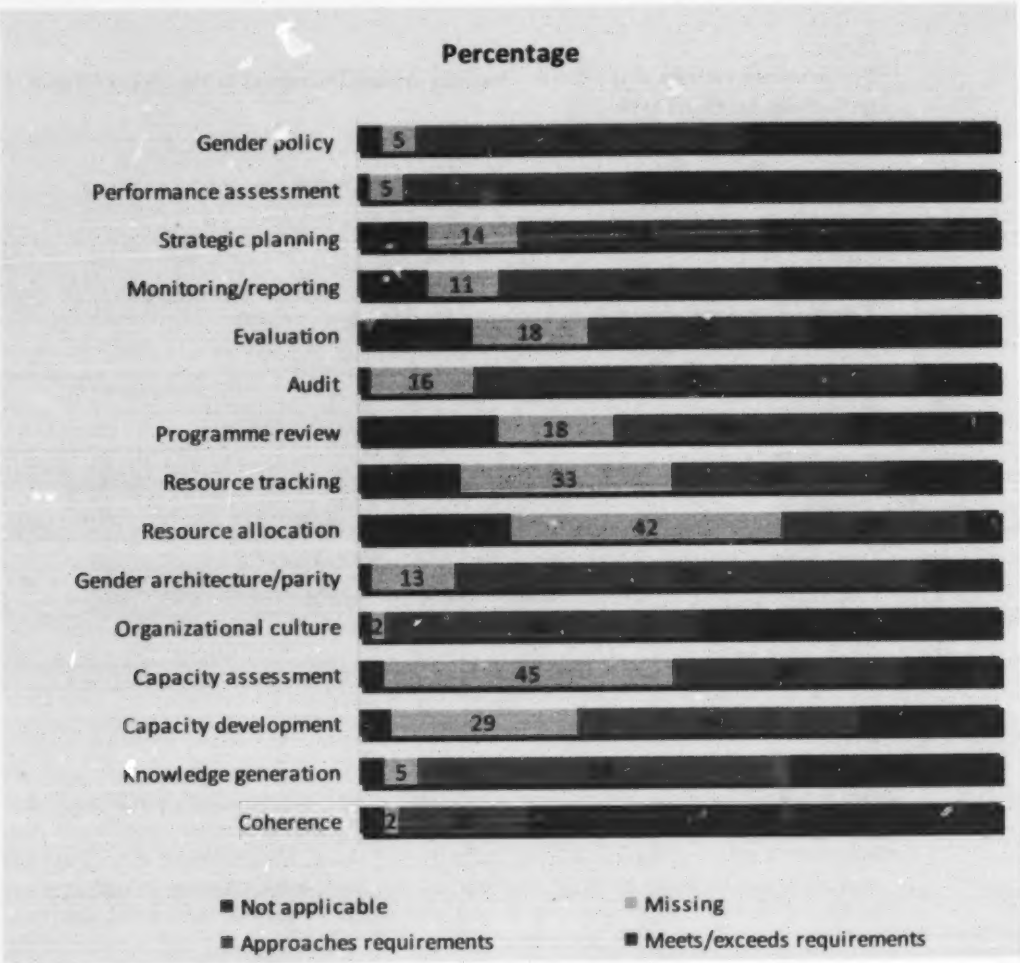
11. As shown in figure I, the United Nations system meets or exceeds requirements in only 31 per cent of ratings on performance indicators,[8] and approaches requirements in another 43 per cent. Considerable, consistent and determined effort is required for a majority of United Nations entities to meet the performance standards by 2017. Further, as the framework requires remedial plans of action for each performance indicator developed by entities where the standards are as yet unmet, it is expected that with greater focus, capacity and resources, the United Nations system can meet the 2017 target. The importance of a majority of entities achieving the rating of "approaches requirements" should not be underestimated: the United Nations system is at a pivotal moment, and can either

[7] For convenience of analysis, IOM was added to the funds and programmes category, UNFCCC to the Secretariat category, and CTBTO and IAEA to the category of specialized entities with a technical focus, as those are the nearest equivalents. Although IOM is not a United Nations entity, it piloted the Action Plan and was closely involved in its development and roll-out. It works closely with the specialized entities and is part of the United Nations country teams in many countries.

[8] Calculations for the United Nations system as a whole are based on 825 individual ratings, that is, 55 entities reporting on 15 performance indicators.

achieve the intergovernmental mandates on which the Action Plan's performance indicators are based, or be perceived to underperform in the critical endeavour of advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Figure II
Distribution of entity ratings, by performance indicator



12. The overall performance of specialized entities, with 48 per cent of ratings on performance indicators meeting or exceeding requirements, suggests that this group is the closest to the Action Plan targets. The United Nations Secretariat (meeting or exceeding requirements in 29 per cent of ratings) and specialized entities with a technical focus (12 per cent meeting or exceeding requirements) should be accorded particular attention in follow-up. The United Nations system as a whole exceeded minimum requirements in only 9 per cent of individual ratings, demonstrating that much improvement is still needed on most fronts.

Strengths

13. "Strengths" refers to areas where 40 per cent or more of the ratings meet or exceed requirements for any given indicator.[9] Performance areas with the strongest ratings were coherence (77 per cent), performance assessment (59 per cent), organizational culture (48 per cent), gender policy (41 per cent) and strategic planning (41 per cent).

14. To meet requirements for coherence, entities need to participate systematically in inter-agency coordination mechanisms on gender equality, and to exceed requirements they need to participate in peer reviews, designed as entity-to-entity learning and accountability exercises. Twenty-two per cent of entities have already committed to peer reviews, demonstrating the positive contribution of the Action Plan to coherence and knowledge exchange.

15. With regard to performance assessment, to meet requirements entities need to have integrated an assessment of gender equality into core values and/or competencies for all staff, with a particular focus on levels P-4 or equivalent and above, and to exceed requirements they need to have in place a system of recognition for excellent work promoting gender equality. Eighty-two per cent of reporting Secretariat entities met or exceeded requirements, compared with 60 per cent of specialized entities, 50 per cent of funds and programmes, and none of the specialized entities with a technical focus. Further, despite the importance attached to rewarding good performance in the Secretary-General's reports on accountability (e.g. A/64/640), only two entities had incentives in place for excellent work promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

16. In respect of organizational culture, entities need to meet seven requirements, including enforcement of regulations on ethical behaviour and work-life balance; facilitative policies on leave; and prevention of discrimination and harassment. While the overall United Nations system results are relatively positive with respect to this indicator (47 per cent meeting or exceeding requirements), it remains unclear whether the performance rating benefits from a more favourable interpretation by entities than actual conditions warrant. To exceed requirements, senior managers need to demonstrate leadership regarding the equal representation of women. Only 16 per cent did so.

17. In the area of gender equality policy, to meet requirements entities need to have an up-to-date gender equality policy in place, including an implementation plan, and to exceed requirements entities need to have in place a specific senior-level accountability mechanism. Of all reporting entities, 13 per cent had developed policies or plans aligned with the Action Plan in 2012, and a further 20 per cent are expected to do so in 2013.[10] Of the funds and programmes, 86 per cent had a gender equality policy, and the rest were working on introducing one. To further drive this trend, UN-Women has prepared guidance on developing gender equality policies aligned with the Action Plan; it is anticipated that most of the

[9] "Not applicable" cases were omitted from the strengths and weaknesses analysis, as indicators deemed not applicable by entities cannot be considered either strong or weak. All figures are for the "meets requirements" and "exceeds requirements" ratings combined. To calculate percentages, the total number of "meets" and "exceeds" ratings for each indicator was divided by the total number of ratings for each indicator minus the number of "not applicable" ratings.

[10] During the roll-out of the Action Plan it was agreed that all entity reporting data would be confidential, so findings are presented in aggregate form.

entities in the United Nations system will have developed such policies by 2017. Of particular note was the introduction of mandatory compliance with reporting under the Action Plan into the Secretary-General's compacts with senior managers in the Secretariat in 2013, demonstrating commitment to accountability.

18. To meet the requirements for strategic planning, entities need to include adequate gender analysis and at least one specific outcome or expected accomplishment and one specific indicator related to gender equality and the empowerment of women in their central strategic planning document. While the ratings for this indicator were relatively positive (41 per cent met or exceeded requirements), adequate gender analysis in strategic planning documents is missing for the majority of United Nations system entities, and only 14 per cent of entities included more than one indicator on gender equality in their central strategic planning document. More positively, however, 43 per cent of the entities that missed or approached the requirements for this indicator will be developing new strategic planning documents for 2014 and beyond, creating opportunities for a stronger presence of a gender perspective in future strategic planning documents.

Weaknesses

19. "Weaknesses" are understood to be areas where 25 per cent or less of the total ratings met or exceeded requirements for any given indicator. Performance areas with the weakest ratings were resource allocation (7 per cent); gender architecture and parity (13 per cent); audit (13 per cent); capacity assessment (15 per cent); resource tracking (22 per cent); and capacity development (23 per cent). All of these areas require urgent attention across the United Nations system.

20. To meet requirements under resource tracking and allocation, entities need a financial resource tracking mechanism (e.g. a gender marker) to quantify the disbursement of funds that promote gender equality; and, for the resource allocation indicator, a financial benchmark for resource allocation for gender equality and women's empowerment needs to be established and met. Reporting showed that only 22 per cent of entities have a resource tracking mechanism in place. However, there have been significant recent advances in relation to tracking resources, including the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) gender equality marker guidance note produced by the subgroup on accounting for resources for gender equality, co-led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), under the auspices of the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality; the gender marker introduced by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in 2009 to be used for humanitarian assistance; and the Action Plan finding that 13 per cent of entities are in the process of introducing a gender marker. Sixteen per cent of entities rated the need for resource allocation as not applicable, including nine Secretariat entities, and 24 per cent noted that resource tracking was not applicable, including eight Secretariat entities, suggesting there may be ambivalence surrounding the introduction of gender markers in some quarters.

21. In the area of gender architecture and parity, entities need to meet three requirements: gender focal points appointed from staff at the P-4 level and above, with written terms of reference and at least 20 per cent of their time allocated to functions relating to gender equality and empowerment of women; equal representation of women for General Service staff and at levels P-4 and above; and full resourcing of the department or unit for gender equality and empowerment of

women. For the first requirement, an overwhelming majority of entities had gender focal points or equivalents in place (89 per cent). However, the strength of this part of the gender architecture was undermined by their lack of seniority (only 54 per cent reported that the majority of their focal points were at the P-4 level or above) and of formalization of their functions (only 52 per cent had written terms of reference and 33 per cent allotted at least 20 per cent of their time to focal-point duties). This raises concerns, in view of the numerous General Assembly resolutions, such as resolutions 64/141 and 65/191, in which the Assembly has called on the Secretary-General to ensure that focal points are designated at a sufficiently high level and enjoy full access to senior management. Seventy-eight per cent of entities had not achieved parity at the P-4 level and above, while 53 per cent had achieved gender balance at the General Service level. Only 5 per cent of entities reported on resourcing for their departments or units for gender equality and empowerment of women.

22. To meet audit requirements, consultation within entities needs to take place between the audit department and gender focal point or department on risks related to gender equality, as part of the annual planning cycle for risk-based audit. While the rating for audit was relatively poor, the dialogue promoted by the Action Plan constitutes the first systematic exchange between the United Nations system's audit and gender equality communities. The Representatives of Internal Audit Services of the United Nations Organizations and Multilateral Financial Institutions led the development of the audit performance indicator, and while few United Nations entities currently meet the requirement, 11 per cent indicated that they are planning to do so over the next year.

23. To meet the requirement on capacity assessment, entities need to carry out an entity-wide assessment of the capacity of staff at the headquarters, regional and country levels in gender equality and the empowerment of women, and establish or update a capacity-development plan every five years. For the indicator on capacity development, ongoing mandatory training for all levels of entity staff at headquarters, regional and country offices was required. In his 2007 report on mainstreaming a gender perspective (E/2007/64), the Secretary-General found that "in most United Nations entities, capacity-building for gender mainstreaming remains primarily ad hoc and voluntary", that "staff members have no incentive to participate in training" (para. 12) and that "woefully insufficient funding for capacity development in gender mainstreaming remains a major challenge across the United Nations system" (para. 64). The Action Plan found limited improvement since 2007, with just over one in five United Nations entities, mainly the funds and programmes and specialized entities, now providing mandatory training for all staff, and only two providing tailored training to senior managers during orientation, meaning most managers may not have adequate capacity. The general training course being finalized by UN-Women, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, will provide added options for mandatory training for all staff. On the basis of entity comments in their reporting, the system would also benefit from the development of a generic capacity-assessment tool.

C. Entity remedial plans of action and qualitative reporting

24. Where indicators are not met, reporting under the Action Plan requires the submission of remedial plans, including timelines, resources and responsibility for follow-up action. These plans are a central part of internal and external dialogue to

address gaps and challenges. Remedial plans of action offer multiple opportunities for improvement across the United Nations system; they provide data on how close individual entities and the United Nations system are to meeting or exceeding requirements by indicator, drawing attention to the areas where entities need to focus attention and the system needs to invest.

25. Analysis by UN-Women of the remedial plans revealed that, overall, their quality could be strengthened: 34 per cent were considered of good quality, 22 per cent adequate and 44 per cent inadequate, meaning that close to half of the plans were not deemed to provide a basis for following up on shortfalls.[11] Underlying reasons for inadequate remedial plans may include relatively greater focus by reporting staff on advocacy for commitment rather than on familiarization with reporting tools and requirements, and inadequate time to reach consensus and obtain the approval of senior management on timelines, resources required and responsibilities. It is expected that staff will now have a greater understanding of reporting requirements, following the baseline round of reporting, and that consequently these factors will mostly be overcome in the next round of reporting, for 2014.

26. Mandatory reporting on additional resources required to improve performance for each indicator constituted the most challenging element identified in Action Plan reporting and the consultations surrounding it. In 52 per cent of cases where entities did not meet requirements, they also failed to provide the resources required for remediation. In the reporting for 2014, greater specificity is needed as to what follow-up resources are required for some indicators, along with greater detail about what follow-up actions will be undertaken where requirements are not being met.

27. Nevertheless, entities reported 127 individual activities that would be undertaken mainly as a result of the Action Plan. The top areas of activity were development and implementation of gender equality policy, capacity assessment and development, and financial resource tracking and allocation.

28. Significantly, in 85 per cent of cases staff other than the gender focal point or unit were designated as responsible for follow-up in remedial plans. This demonstrates that the new model, incorporating a strengthened network of responsibility and accountability spread more widely throughout the organizations, is taking hold. Of equal significance is the increased engagement of senior managers, as promoted throughout the Action Plan process.

29. For entities that did report on resources required, the total funding requirement to meet all performance indicators, across all reporting entities, came to some $28 million. Greater attention to ensuring the accuracy of this figure in the next round of reporting will be important. The main areas identified for additional resource requirements by performance indicator, across all reporting entities, included development and implementation of policies ($7.7 million), gender architecture and parity ($5.7 million) and capacity development ($4.6 million). This prioritization of funding correlates with key factors leading to organizational change that supports gender equality and the empowerment of women. Some areas of the

[11] Good: all elements of remedial plan covered and full details for progress provided. Adequate: all or most elements of remedial plan covered and details for progress provided in the majority of cases. Inadequate: one or two elements of the remedial plan covered and/or details for progress not provided in the majority of cases.

Action Plan appeared to require improved organizational practice rather than a significant investment of funds.

30. Factors most critical for progress, as identified in the qualitative comments provided by 39 reporting entities, included:

- Commitment of senior management (51 per cent)
- Endorsement of a gender equality policy (15 per cent)
- Adequate staffing, resources and capacity for promoting gender equality (13 per cent)
- Clarity of responsibility and accountability for the work of the organization on gender equality and the empowerment of women (13 per cent)

31. Weaknesses in the above areas seriously impeded progress. The findings of the reporting exercise substantiate at the system-wide level numerous reviews within individual entities.

III. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all operational mechanisms

32. In its resolution 2012/24, the Economic and Social Council requested the United Nations system to continue to work to better align gender equality programming with national priorities with the aim of integrating gender perspectives into policies, legislations and programmes. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/226, entitled "Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system", underscored the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of women in United Nations operational activities for development. It requested the United Nations system to increase investment and focus on gender equality work and to use several instruments, such as the UNDG performance indicators on gender equality (gender scorecard) and gender markers to enhance accountability for such work. Additionally, the United Nations system has adopted gender equality as one of the five programming principles in the planning of its operational activities through the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs).[12] The aim is to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are recognized and addressed in all substantive programming.

33. The present section places special emphasis on assessing progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective at the country level, including through the UNDAFs. It draws on the 123 annual reports of the resident coordinators for 2012, as well as other sources.

A. Alignment of gender equality programming with national priorities

34. It has been found that 80 per cent of governments agree that the activities of the United Nations are generally closely aligned with national development needs

[12] See Angela Bester, *Results-Based Management in the United Nations Development System: Progress and Challenges*, final report prepared for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (July 2012).

and priorities.[13] Although the annual reports of resident coordinators do not represent a comprehensive inventory of the work of the United Nations country teams, they are important tools to promote accountability and a valuable source of information for defining trends in programming work. The 2012 annual reports of resident coordinators showed that the country teams had provided support for advancing national gender equality priorities, including in ending violence against women (114 reports), reproductive health (79), HIV/AIDS (79), women's political participation (51) and education (52). Also, 62 reports noted efforts to fully integrate gender equality into national strategy documents, including national development strategies and poverty reduction strategies, compared with 17 in 2004.

35. In 73 countries the United Nations supported national women's machinery, including in the implementation of national policies and action plans on gender equality. For example, the United Nations country team in Lebanon supported the National Commission for Lebanese Women in developing the operational plan for the National Women's Strategy. In Colombia, the Presidential Advisory Office for the Equality of Women, in coordination with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), UNDP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), designed the first-ever public policy on gender.

B. Coordination mechanisms at the country level

36. Coordination plays a major role in placing gender equality at the centre of United Nations joint programming and strengthening effectiveness in the field. Since the mid-1990s, the United Nations system has enhanced programmatic coordination through the creation of UNDG, the strengthening of the resident coordinator system, including the United Nations country teams, and the introduction of the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.[14]

37. UNDG aims to ensure that the United Nations development system delivers high-quality support to countries seeking to attain internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. In response to General Assembly resolution 67/226, the Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda and the evolving international development and cooperation environment, the UNDG Advisory Group launched its Common Strategic Priorities for 2013-2016, among which increased investment in and focus on gender equality-related results are promoted as prerequisites for reaching the Millennium Development Goals and the internationally agreed development goals.

38. Resident coordinators lead more than 130 United Nations country teams as key drivers of the system-wide coherence of operational activities for development.[15] General Assembly resolution 67/226 underscores the importance of ensuring system-wide coherence in both programmatic and operational terms, and reaffirms that system-wide coherence helps to promote greater attention to gender equality

[13] A/67/93-E/2012/79, para. 110.
[14] A/67/93-E/2012/79, para. 77.
[15] Ibid., para. 84.

and the empowerment of women in the United Nations system's programming, advocacy and policy work at the national level.

39. Evaluations and reports agree that joint programmes, when well coordinated, contribute to the expansion of multisectoral engagement and awareness of the importance of gender equality issues in achieving development results.[16] According to the annual reports of resident coordinators for 2012, 115 United Nations country teams had gender equality joint initiatives in 2012, up from 105 in 2010 and 43 in 2004; 99 country teams made gender equality a key element in their workplans, up from 49 in 2004; and efforts focused on developing strong gender equality components in UNDAFs in 57 countries.

40. In undertaking its system-wide coordination mandate, UN-Women is present in all eight "Delivering as one" pilot countries, contributing to the promotion of accountability, strategic advocacy and communications "in one voice" on gender equality issues within the country teams. The "Delivering as one" initiative involves delivering better support to countries and development processes, including on cross-cutting issues such as gender equality. The multisectoral approach leads to greater awareness of how gender issues are relevant to the effectiveness of development in different sectors and improved planning to address gender inequality in a coordinated manner. Nevertheless, the independent evaluation of lessons learned from the "Delivering as one" initiative[17] concluded that effectively promoting gender equality and women's empowerment still requires the full commitment of management, adequate staff incentives and monitoring of results.

41. There are currently 113 gender theme groups[18] around the world, of which 62 are led or co-led by UN-Women. Gender theme groups bring together representatives of United Nations entities working on gender equality at the country level, thus promoting increased inter-agency coordination and allowing greater visibility of gender equality issues within the overall United Nations development agenda at the country level.

42. The gender theme groups aim to mainstream gender equality into the development agenda, advocating for more equitable legal and policy environments, and implementing and monitoring national gender equality priorities. They also improve reporting on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and implementation of the Committee's concluding observations. For example, in Belarus the gender theme group advocates for gender mainstreaming in programming work, with special attention to the implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and in 2012 it supported the monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming in national development plans. In the Islamic Republic of Iran the gender theme group organized a series of participatory workshops and individual meetings in 2012 to identify entry points for mainstreaming gender perspectives in the UNDAF for 2012-2016. It also prepared a database on national, regional and international consultants specialized in gender-related issues, mainly in Islamic contexts, and a checklist for entry points for gender mainstreaming in projects of United Nations agencies.

[16] See UNW/2013/1.

[17] See United Nations, *Independent Evaluation of Delivering As One: Main Report* (New York, 2012). Available from www.un.org/en/ga/deliveringasone/pdf/mainreport.pdf.

[18] In 2010 the resident coordinators reported 106 gender theme groups and in 2004 only 37.

C. Financial resources for gender equality programming

43. In its resolution 2012/24, the Economic and Social Council requested the United Nations system to ensure that the various accountability mechanisms in place promoted more coherent, accurate and effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the tracking of gender-related resource allocation and expenditure, including through the promotion of the use of the gender markers.

44. In supporting the UNDG gender equality marker guidance note under the auspices of the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality (see para. 20 above), UN-Women draws on its experience in assisting more than 65 countries through gender-responsive budgeting initiatives to incorporate gender perspectives into their public finance management systems.

45. At the country level, the adoption of the gender marker or other financial tracking tools helps to improve the effectiveness of development assistance targeted to gender equality and women's empowerment. In Nepal, the United Nations Peace Fund for Nepal is committed to meeting the target of the Secretary-General's seven-point action plan for women's participation in peacebuilding in post-conflict settings, for which 15 per cent of all United Nations peacebuilding funding should be allocated to gender-responsive peacebuilding initiatives.

46. Partnerships and resources are critical for leveraging and supporting the gender equality work of the United Nations system, including at the country level. The annual reports of resident coordinators for 2012 highlighted efforts to mobilize funds for joint programmes. The United Nations country team in Eritrea commenced the formulation of a joint resource mobilization strategy within the UNDAF. In Ethiopia, the Governments of Norway and Sweden signed agreements to contribute $3.17 million and $1.5 million, respectively, to the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Joint Programme for the next three years. UN-Women partnered with the United Nations Capital Development Fund on a gender-equitable development programme in Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania.

D. Human resources

47. The UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality undertook an exercise, facilitated by UN-Women, to map personnel working on gender equality throughout the United Nations system both at headquarters and in the field, including gender focal point staff[19] and gender specialists or advisers.[20] The mapping is aimed at better supporting United Nations system activities on and investments in gender equality.

48. Information for the mapping was compiled through two surveys requesting data on human and institutional resources for 2012. Country-level surveys were sent to 138 resident coordinator offices for the compilation of country-specific data, while headquarters-level surveys were sent to members of the Inter-Agency

[19] Staff or personnel without a specific reference to gender-related functions in their job description or terms of reference and who spend less than 50 per cent of their time on gender issues.

[20] Staff or personnel who have a specific reference to gender-related functions in their job description or terms of reference and who spend 50 per cent or more of their time on gender issues.

Network on Women and Gender Equality requesting data on each of the fifty-seven United Nations headquarters, regional and liaison offices.[21]

49. From preliminary findings based on responses from 125 out of 138 United Nations country teams and the vast majority of United Nations entities at the headquarters level, it is estimated that there are 2,923 Professional staff in the United Nations system performing gender-related functions as part of their job responsibilities. Extrapolating from the responses received from the United Nations country teams, nearly 3,102 Professional staff are working on gender issues throughout the United Nations system,[22] approximately 70 per cent of whom are based in country teams and 30 per cent at headquarters and liaison or regional offices.

50. Despite the significant number of staff working on gender equality issues in the United Nations system, in total they constitute only 7.9 per cent of United Nations staff (Professional and higher levels) and personnel working on development programming. This reflects limited growth since 2003, when they were estimated to constitute 7.4 per cent of staff at the Professional and higher levels.[23]

51. In terms of staff grades, the vast majority of gender focal points in United Nations country teams are at the National Professional Officer-C (equivalent to P-3), National Professional Officer-B (equivalent to P-2) and P-3 levels. At headquarters and liaison or regional offices, the majority of gender-specialist staff are National Professional Officer-B, National Professional Officer-C and P-4. It is worth noting that the number of gender specialists or advisers present in country teams is approximately half the number of gender focal points (693 and 1,287, respectively).

52. To better support United Nations system activities on gender equality, the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality is also working to develop a roster of gender experts within the United Nations system who will be able to provide support services to United Nations country teams in integrating gender equality in common programming. That new roster will be part of the UNDG expert-roster platform and will serve the needs of inter-agency initiatives.

E. Monitoring, evaluation and accountability for programming work on gender equality

53. The United Nations gender equality programming work has benefited from strengthened attention to accountability in gender equality policies and action plans, monitoring and evaluation and internal oversight mechanisms. Gender mainstreaming has increasingly become a cross-sectoral strategy for making gender

[21] The World Bank was the exception. Its Gender and Development unit at headquarters was requested to provide both headquarters and country-level staff data, owing to the exclusion of World Bank data by the United Nations country teams.

[22] Assuming that United Nations country teams are a homogeneous set.

[23] Calculated as a proportion of all staff at the Professional and higher levels of reporting entities, on contracts of one year or more, estimated to be 35,977 in 2011/12 (13,338 in 2003). 2011/12 data for United Nations system entities is based on CEB data as at 31 December 2011 (CEB/2012/HLCM/HR16, tables 1A and 1C); data for Secretariat departments are from A/67/329, annex, table 1.B, as at 30 June 2012. The Professional category includes all staff in the Professional category proper, as well as in the Principal Officer and Director category and in higher-level posts (Assistant Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General or similar title and executive head).

considerations an integral dimension of the programming work in all UNDAF priority areas. Gender-related outcomes and outputs are accompanied by performance indicators to guide programme design and facilitate monitoring and evaluation after implementation. The annual reports of resident coordinators for 2012 showed that the number of UNDAFs containing references to gender equality in at least one outcome statement increased to 57 in 2012, compared with 48 in 2010 and 41 in 2004. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the Inter-Agency Gender Group undertook a gender analysis of the United Nations Development Assistance Plan results matrix, identifying gender equality priorities across the programming elements. Training and guidance were provided to secure comprehensive adoption of the resultant recommendations.

54. Accountability for gender equality is strengthened by the use of tools such as the UNDG gender scorecard, the gender audit and the gender marker to track resources applied towards gender equality results. In the context of "Delivering as one", the presence of UN-Women has contributed to the implementation by all eight pilot countries of performance indicators and/or gender audits, or established some form of gender marker to assess performance and investment. In Zambia, in 2012 the United Nations country team supported gender audits in line ministries, as well as the undertaking of a national gender perception survey.

55. In 2012, 10 annual reports of resident coordinators highlighted the use of the gender scorecard to track the contribution of common country programming to gender equality. The gender scorecard is aimed at assisting the United Nations country teams in identifying areas in which they are meeting or not meeting minimum standards on gender mainstreaming; stimulating a constructive dialogue within the country teams about the current status of gender mainstreaming; identifying remedial actions where minimum standards are not being met; and supporting the sharing of good practices. The importance of the gender scorecard was recognized by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/226, in which it requested the United Nations development system to strengthen its use as a planning and reporting tool for assessing the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming for use by the country teams in the UNDAF context.

56. Since 2008, 31 countries have completed the exercise of applying the gender scorecard, showing that standards for gender mainstreaming can be effectively set, based on existing United Nations mandates. A review of the first 20 United Nations country teams to complete the gender scorecard during its first three years[24] showed that only 3 of them met the standards in the area of monitoring and evaluation; 6 met the requirement that the UNDAF monitoring and evaluation framework measure progress towards the expected gender equality results at the outcome and output levels; and only 1 country team carried out a dedicated gender equality evaluation or audit. Nevertheless, the review concluded that the scorecard had provided country-level senior managers with a practical tool to assess whether they were meeting United Nations mandates and allowed the establishment of a baseline against which a country team could measure progress and UNDG could identify system-wide strengths and areas for improvement.

57. United Nations entities have also undertaken efforts to strengthen the accountability of staff and managers through the institutionalization of workplans

[24] Review facilitated by UN-Women under the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality.

and performance appraisals that include objectives related to programming work on gender equality. UNDP developed the Gender Equality Seal, a certification that recognizes good performance of UNDP offices and units to deliver transformational gender equality results. In the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment,[25] launched in 2012, a key deliverable for country programmes and projects is the increased capacity of IFAD management and staff at headquarters and in the field to address gender equality and women's empowerment for improved project performance and country-level policy dialogue.

F. Capacity development

58. The United Nations system has made efforts to strengthen internal capacity related to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Web-based courses available to the United Nations system in the development context include the joint course "Gender equality, United Nations coherence and you", developed by UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, which is aimed at strengthening gender-programming knowledge and skills required for United Nations programme staff. In the humanitarian context, Inter-Agency Standing Committee's online course "Different needs — equal opportunities: increasing effectiveness of humanitarian action for women, girls, boys and men" provides the basic steps a humanitarian worker must take to ensure gender equality in programming. Entities committed to providing this e-learning course include the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OHCHR, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization.

59. The number of United Nations country teams investing in their own capacities to support gender-equality advancements has more than doubled – from 24 in 2004 to 58 in 2010 and 64 in 2012. In the Dominican Republic, for example, three internal capacity analyses and a capacity-building programme took place in 2012, with the participation of gender focal points of all United Nations entities. Also, UN-Women and UNICEF conducted a series of workshops on new masculinities, discrimination and violence for all national police staff working at United Nations premises, as well as service employees and drivers, to raise awareness about gender and diversity issues. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Gender Working Group organized a series of participatory workshops and individual meetings in 2012 to identify common and individual agencies' entry points within the United Nations system for mainstreaming gender in the UNDAF for 2012-2016. In Suriname, United Nations system gender focal points and other staff were trained on mainstreaming gender into United Nations initiatives, particularly the UNDAF for 2012-2016. United Nations staff were also sensitized on gender, health and leadership issues. Members of the Suriname UNDAF programme coordination groups received gender mainstreaming and results-based management training.

[25] Available from www.ifad.org/gender/policy/gender_e.pdf.

G. Comparable sex- and age-disaggregated data

60. Evidence-based policymaking is a priority area of United Nations country team support to Member States. Building better sex- and age-disaggregated databases and analysis is a means to guide country programming investments, to support programming and results-based frameworks, and to measure progress and impact, including for monitoring Millennium Development Goal indicators.

61. The annual reports of resident coordinators for 2012 reflected the fact that 46 United Nations country teams supported Member States in strengthening capacity for gender analysis and programming, for which access to quality information disaggregated by sex and age is critical. For example, joint programmes have made explicit efforts to improve the availability of sex-disaggregated data at finer levels of detail and the need to harmonize gender-related statistical information from different sectors for analysis. In Kenya, the UNDAF for 2009-2013 stated in its cross-cutting section on gender that all baseline information for the UNDAF would be based on the collection and analysis of sex- and age-disaggregated data, and the output indicators were framed in a gender-sensitive manner. In Jordan, the evaluation of the scorecard in 2012 stressed the use of sex-disaggregated data by the United Nations country team in developing the UNDAF for 2013-2017. This shows that the country team understands the implications of mainstreaming gender in joint programming and that it has an appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework.

62. In 2012 UN-Women, the United Nations Statistics Division, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development launched the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality Initiative to generate comparable gender-specific indicators on health, education, employment, entrepreneurship and assets.

IV. Remaining gaps and challenges

63. Member States and the United Nations system increasingly recognize that gender equality and the empowerment of women are requisites for economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development and that much progress has been achieved in advancing the gender equality goal. However, gaps and challenges remain.

64. At the corporate level, the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women requires the design of entity-specific remedial plans, including estimates of required financial resources, timelines and responsibility for follow-up, by performance indicator. These plans can be drawn on by entities and regarded as commitments to work towards meeting or exceeding Action Plan requirements, and are vehicles for dialogue and accountability both within entities and across the United Nations system. Follow-up to and implementation of the remedial plans constitute a major challenge and will be reviewed on a six-monthly basis by UN-Women through reporting workshops and interaction with individual entities. Particular attention should be given to entities with multiple or highly technical mandates if the 2017 target is to be achieved.

65. Effective measures for gender equality are critical for enhancing the effectiveness and accountability of the United Nations system. Particular attention should be devoted to developing gender equality policies that are aligned with the Action Plan, strengthening gender analysis in strategic planning documents,

developing and using common resource-tracking mechanisms, incentives for outstanding performance of staff on gender equality and the empowerment of women, providing leadership for the equal representation of women in the United Nations system, including in particular at the P-4 level and above, and appointing gender focal points at senior levels.

66. Other keys to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women are the further consideration of risks related to gender equality and the empowerment of women in annual audit planning cycles, and increased capacity assessment and training. Overall, meaningful progress in implementing the remedial plans under the Action Plan constitutes a major challenge, requiring consistent and constant monitoring and support through reporting workshops, interaction with individual entities and investment of a necessary minimum of resources. In essence, the development and implementation of incrementally resourced and focused remedial plans will determine whether the United Nations system is progressing at an adequate pace towards the 2017 goal.

67. At the level of United Nations country teams, the annual reports of resident coordinators for 2012 reveal that weak institutional capacities, inadequate human and financial resources and lack of political will still hinder the effectiveness of programming work on gender equality. The small number of gender specialists at all levels and the lack of senior staff with expertise in gender equality and women's empowerment constitute a challenge to gender mainstreaming work. Evaluations continue to find that, despite efforts for improvement, gender focal points often have limited background or experience in gender, most perform this role in addition to their other full-time duties, and they often operate in isolation, with no budget to go along with the additional gender equality work.

68. The annual reports of resident coordinators for 2012 highlighted that the lack of adequate, predictable and sustained funding continues to challenge gender equality programming work. Also, the capacity to monitor and track the allocation and disbursement of financial resources is generally weak or non-existent, especially in integrated interventions.

69. While the coherence of the United Nations development system has improved, accountability continues to be hampered at times by weak monitoring of results, limited staff capacity, limited knowledge and undeveloped reporting systems. There are also limitations in the application of results-based management within the United Nations system and specific difficulties in defining gender-related outputs and indicators in complex integrated programming. Nevertheless, it appears that programmes with a specific focus on women are more likely to use sound results-based management techniques and score higher against performance standards than those where gender is one part of a broader initiative.[26]

70. While the gender scorecard is generally accepted, the fact that it is not mandatory and that United Nations country teams do not always include timelines, resources and responsibilities in the follow-up matrix has diminished its potential effectiveness. There is urgent need for capacity development in basic results-based management, and on the centrality of sound programme management to gender mainstreaming outputs and outcomes. Evaluations have found capacity development needs in relation to advocacy, networking or strategically engaging with

[26] A/67/93-E/2012/79, para. 199.

government. Common strategies to target priority populations and issues remain the exception, with the majority of programmes seeking to bring together a set of existing activities under one common umbrella.

71. Resident coordinators continue to stress that, owing to the limited access to sex-disaggregated data at the household level regarding poverty and employment, it is difficult to assess the impact of economic growth in terms of poverty reduction among women and address gender-based disparities in regional development for the purpose of identifying gaps to be addressed through United Nations country team programming. Limited national sex-disaggregated data for the United Nations system remains a major obstacle in the design and monitoring of intervention policies.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

72. The United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women has provided the United Nations system with a vision of what is achievable given dynamic planning, senior management accountability and adequate resources and capacity. Following the endorsement of the Action Plan by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination as an inter-agency accountability framework, Member States strongly supported its roll-out and implementation, for example, in Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/24. Furthermore, through its resolution 67/226, the General Assembly contributed to strengthening the United Nations system's common purpose, understanding and impetus with regard to delivering results on gender equality and empowerment of women. This helped to vitalize such work, as evidenced by the consistent engagement and commitment of senior managers and the high levels of reporting on the Action Plan. United Nations staff are now clearer about their responsibilities for their organizations' work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, and senior managers are increasingly accountable, for example, through the senior managers' compacts with the Secretary-General in the United Nations Secretariat. The Action Plan has the potential to facilitate the longer-term strategic planning that the United Nations needs to meet its mandates on gender equality and empowerment of women at the corporate level.

73. At the national level, the review of the annual reports of resident coordinators for 2012 indicates increased efforts to incorporate gender perspectives comprehensively within the United Nations system programming cycle at the country level. Accountability mechanisms for senior managers and staff have also been used to ensure commitment to gender equality development results. The use of results-based management frameworks with targets, outcomes and outputs continues to expand, as a means to improve implementation, monitoring and reporting. The development of indicators and the enhanced use of sex- and age-disaggregated data are reported to be of strategic importance for the work of United Nations country teams and capacity-development programmes for United Nations staff.

74. Despite important progress, more needs to be done to address the gaps and challenges outlined above. The Economic and Social Council may wish to call upon the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies and funds and programmes, to:

(a) Continue to roll out the Action Plan and report on progress made in its implementation, including on entity-specific remedial action plans, as a system-wide accountability mechanism for results achieved in gender equality and empowerment of women;

(b) Invest in remedying the gaps identified through the Action Plan reporting to support progress towards meeting the standards set;

(c) Ensure that the various accountability mechanisms of the United Nations system provide for more coherent, accurate and effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting on gender equality results and on the tracking of gender-related resource allocation and expenditure, including through the promotion of the use of gender markers;

(d) Continue to better align gender equality programming with national priorities across sectors, with the aim of mainstreaming gender perspectives into all legislation, policies and programmes;

(e) Strengthen the coordination of gender-responsive operational activities through existing coordination mechanisms at the country level and in partnership with national stakeholders;

(f) Encourage the United Nations development system to institute greater accountability in evaluations conducted by country teams by including gender perspectives in such evaluations;

(g) Expand and strengthen the use of the UNDG performance indicators on gender equality (gender scorecard) as a planning and reporting tool for assessing the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming for use by the country teams in the context of UNDAF;

(h) Substantially increase the investment in and focus on outcomes and outputs relating to gender equality and the empowerment of women in the UNDAF programmes, including by strengthening the predictability of funding, broadening the donor base and increasing the flexibility of non-core resources;

(i) Encourage the United Nations development system to acquire sufficient technical expertise for gender mainstreaming in programme planning and implementation to ensure that gender dimensions are systematically addressed and, in this regard, draw on the gender equality expertise available in the United Nations system, including at UN-Women, to assist in the preparation of UNDAFs and other relevant programming frameworks;

(j) Encourage the collection, analysis and dissemination of data, disaggregated by sex and age, in a regular and systematic manner, in order to guide country programming, and to support the preparation of organization-wide and country-level documents, such as the strategic, programmatic and results-based frameworks, and to continue to refine their tools for measuring progress and impact.

75. Member States also have a crucial contribution to make to the enhancement of gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system, including encouraging and supporting the system's continued and effective implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, through their participation in the governing bodies of entities of the United Nations.